NUMB. CCCCLVIII.

The SPECTATOR.

——— Pudor malus ——— Hor.

Friday, Auguſt 15. 1712.

Could not but Smile at the Account, that was Yeſterday given me of a modeſt young Gentleman, who being invited to an Entertainment, though he was not uſed to drink, had the Confidence to refuſe his Glaſs in his Turn, on a ſudden he grew ſo fluſtered, that he all the Talk of the Table into his own abuſed every one that was preſent, and flung at the Gentleman's Head that treated him. has given me Occaſion to reflect upon the of a vicious Modeſty, and to remember the of *Brutus*, as it is quoted by *Plutarch*, that *Perſon has had but an ill Education, who has taught to deny any thing.* This falſe kind Modeſty has, perhaps, betrayed both Sexes into Vices as the moſt abandoned Impudence, the more inexcuſable to Reaſon, becauſe to gratifie others rather than it ſelf, and is with a kind of Remorſe, not only like o-vicious Habits when the Crime is over, but at the very time that it is committed.

Nothing is more amiable than true Modeſty, Nothing is more contemptible than the falſe. One guards Virtue, the other betrays it. True Modeſty is aſhamed to do any thing that is repug-to the Rules of right Reaſon: Falſe Modeſty to do any thing that is oppoſite to the of Company. True Modeſty avoids e-thing that is criminal, falſe Modeſty every thing unfaſhionable. The latter is only a general mined Inſtinct; the former is that Inſtinct, and circumſcribed by the Rules of Pru-and Religion.

may conclude that Modeſty to be falſe and which engages a Man to do any thing that is ill or indiſcreet, or which reſtrains him from doing any that is of a contrary Nature. How many Men, in the common Concerns of Life, lend Sums of Mony that they are not able to ſpare, are Bound for Perſons whom they have but little Friendſhip for, give Recommendatory Characters of Men whom they are not acquainted with, beſtow Places on thoſe whom they do not eſteem, live in ſuch a manner as they themſelves do not approve, and all this meerly becauſe they have not a Confidence to reſiſt Solicitation, Importunity or Example?

Nor does this falſe Modeſty expoſe us to ſuch Actions as are indiſcreet, but very often to ſuch as are highly criminal. When *Xenophon* was called timorous, becauſe he would not venture his Mony in a Game at Dice: *I confeſs*, ſaid he, *that I am exceeding timorous, for I dare not do an ill thing.* On the contrary, a Man of vicious Modeſty complies with every thing, and is only fearful of doing what may look ſingular in the Company where he is engaged. He falls in with the Torrent, and lets himſelf go to every Action or Diſcourſe, however unjuſtifiable in its ſelf, ſo it be in Vogue among the preſent Party. This, though one of the moſt common, is one of the moſt ridiculous Diſpoſitions in Human Nature, that Men ſhould not be aſhamed of ſpeaking or acting in a diſſolute or irrational manner, but that one who is in their Company ſhould be aſhamed of governing himſelf by the Principles of Reaſon and Virtue.

In the ſecond place we are to conſider falſe Modeſty, as it reſtrains a Man from doing what is good and laudable. My Reader's own Thoughts will ſuggeſt to him many Inſtances and Examples under this Head. I ſhall only dwell upon one Reflection,

flection, which I cannot make without a Secret Concern. We have in *England* a particular Bashfulneſs in every thing that regards Religion. A well-bred Man is obliged to conceal any Serious Sentiment of this Nature, and very often to appear a greater Libertine than he is, that he may keep himſelf in Countenance among the Men of Mode. Our Exceſs of Modeſty makes us ſhame-faced in all the Exerciſes of Piety and Devotion. This Humour prevails upon us daily; inſomuch, that at many well-bred Tables, the Maſter of the Houſe is ſo very Modeſt a Man, that he has not the Confidence to ſay Grace at his own Table: A Cuſtom that is not only practiſed by all the Nations about us, but was never omitted by the Heathens themſelves. *Engliſh* Gentlemen who Travel into Roman Catholick Countries, are not a little ſurprized to meet with People of the beſt Quality kneeling in their Churches, and engaged in their private Devotions, tho' it be not at the Hours of Publick Worſhip. An Officer of the Army, or a Man of Wit and Pleaſure in thoſe Countries, would be afraid of paſſing not only for an Irreligious, but an Ill-bred Man, ſhould he be ſeen to go to Bed, or ſit down at Table, without offering up his Devotions on ſuch Occaſions. The ſame Show of Religion appears in all the Foreign Reformed Churches, and enters ſo much into their Ordinary Converſation, that an *Engliſhman* is apt to term them Hypocritical and Preciſe.

This little Appearance of a Religious Deportment in our Nation, may proceed in ſome meaſure from that Modeſty which is natural to us, but the great occaſion of it is certainly this. Thoſe Swarms of Sectaries that over-ran the Nation in the time of the great Rebellion, carried their Hypocriſie ſo high, that they had converted our whole Language into a Jargon of Enthuſiaſm; inſomuch that upon the Reſtoration Men thought they could not recede too far from the Behaviour and Practice of thoſe Perſons, who had made Religion a Cloak to ſo many Villanies. This led them into the other Extream, every Appearance of Devotion was looked upon as Puritannical, and falling into the Hands of the Ridiculers who flouriſhed in that Reign, and attacked every thing that was Serious, it has ever ſince been out of Countenance among us. By this means we are gradually fallen into that Vicious Modeſty which has in ſome meaſure worn out from among us the Appearance of Chriſtianity in Ordinary Life and Converſation, and which diſtinguiſhes us from all the Nations that lie about us.

Hypocriſie cannot indeed be too much deteſte but at the ſame time is to be preferred to open l piety. They are both equally deſtructive to Perſon who is poſſeſſed of them; but in regard others, Hypocriſie is not ſo pernicious as bare-fac Irreligion. The due Mean to be obſerved is to ſincerely Virtuous, and at the ſame time to let World ſee we are ſo. I do not know a m dreadful Menace in the Holy Writings, than which is pronounced againſt thoſe who have perverted Modeſty, to be aſhamed before Men Particular of ſuch unſpeakable Importance.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

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AT the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane this pre Friday being the 15th Inſtant, will be preſented the laſt viv'd Comedy call'd the London Cuckolds. Ramble by Mr. Townly Mr. Husband, Doodle Mr. Johnſon, Wiſecre Mr. Ba Driwell Mr. Bowen, Loveday Mr. Bullock Jun. Arabella Bradſhaw, Peggy Miſs. Willis. With the laſt new Morris D by Mr Norris, and others. By Her Majeſty's Command, no P are to be admitted behind the Scenes.

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